What is a quantifier?

many birds

Little water

1 Birds picture from m_bartosch / FreeDigitalPhotos.net
Types of Quantifiers
10 min

A quantifier is a word that expresses a quantity.

Some quantifiers are used with countable nouns:
- few apples
- a few apples
- a couple of apples
- several apples
- many apples
- most apples
- all apples

Some quantifiers are used with uncountable nouns:
- little water
- a little water = a bit of water
- much water

Some quantifiers work with countable and uncountable nouns:
- Enough apples/water
- a lack of apples/water (= not enough)
- a lot of apples/water = lots of apples/water = plenty of apples/water
- most of the apples/water
- all (of) the apples/water

See the lesson on countable and uncountable nouns for details.

Language Tips on Quantifiers
3 min

In formal English, it is better to use 'many' and 'much' rather than phrases such as 'a lot of', 'lots of' and 'plenty of'.

There is a difference between 'few' and 'a few':

small quantity
big quantity
Examples:
Few flowers = not many flowers
a few flowers = some flowers

There is the same difference between 'little' and 'a little':
Examples:
little time = not a lot of time
a little time = some time

Writing Exercise
5 min

Complete the sentences with: few / a few / little / a little.

1. Could we have __________ Champagne, please?
2. They live in a very small flat because they have __________ money.
3. Very __________ people can speak 5 languages.
4. This plant needs __________ water and it is very handy.
5. They have already been to Africa __________ times.
6. We have __________ time before our flight.
7. He speaks German very well but sometimes he makes __________ mistakes.
8. I am happy she has __________ problems in her life.
9. Would you like __________ candies?
10. I know __________ about this subject.
Writing Exercise
5 min
Complete the sentences with 'much' or 'many'.

1. I have ________ friends in Europe.
2. I don't drink ________ coffee.
3. How ________ children do you have?
4. How ________ does this bag cost?
5. How ________ rice do you need?
6. How ________ is this shirt?
7. We don't have ________ time.
8. I went to Minnesota ________ times last year.
9. There is not ________ sand in the car.
10. Jim works on ________ different projects.

Reading Exercise
5 min
Read the sentences and find a synonym for the quantifier.

Example:

I have many shoes.
Synonym: I have a lot of shoes.
1. The children have plenty of toys.
2. Would you like a little champagne?
3. He spends the majority of his time on the computer.
4. I sent lots of emails.
5. There is a bit of water on the floor.

Speaking Exercise with the Teacher (LOC-GR7-01-Si1)
5 min
Listen to the teacher's questions. Then, answer.
1. How many children do you have?
2. Do you have lots of friends?
3. Do you have little patience?
4. Do you spend plenty of money on clothes?
5. How much does gas cost in your country? (at the gas station)
Speaking Exercise with the Teacher
5 min

Ask your teacher 4 questions using quantifiers.
1. How many ________________?
2. How ________________?
2. Do you have ________________?
3. ________________?

Watch the Video!
5 min
With this video lesson, you will practice quantifiers.

Watch the video:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tYsZ1cZzwWq

Watch the video again and complete the text:
Angie is sad. She has ____________ friends. Her cat is sick and has ____________ time to live. She lives in her car. She has ____________ clothing and ____________ shoes. She has ____________ money to buy what she needs.
Sandra is happy. She worked ____________ jobs this summer and saved ____________ money for college. She has ____________ close friends. She is going to spend ____________ days camping. She has ____________ to relax before the school starts.

Note: in the video, the speaker uses the terms “count nouns” and “non count nouns” to refer to countable and uncountable nouns.
Quiz
10 min

True or False?

1. There is no difference between 'little' and 'a little'.
   true false
2. 'few' is used with uncountable nouns.
   true false
3. Some quantifiers work with countable and uncountable nouns.
   true false
4. In formal English, it is better to use 'many' and 'much' rather than phrases such as 'a lot of', 'lots of' and 'plenty of'.
   true false

Match the quantifiers on the left to the appropriate definitions on the right.

| 1. little energy | a. a bit of energy |
| 2. a little energy | b. a lot of energy |
| 3. a lack of energy | c. not a lot of energy |
| 4. much energy | d. not enough energy |

1. ______
2. ______
3. ______
4. ______

Choose the correct word(s):

1. They gave the homeless man ______________ dollars. (a few / a little)
2. Americans give ______________ money to charity. (much / many)
3. ______________ women like shopping. (most / most of)
4. His ______________ enthusiasm surprised me. (lack / lack of)
5. He drank ______________ juice in his glass. (all / all the)
6. Did you buy ______________ apples to cook a pie? (enough / much)
7. I wish I could spend ______________ time in Egypt. (a few / a little)
8. It took very ______________ time to cross Belgium! (few / little)
9. We know ______________ people who face the same problem. (several / several of)
10. I stayed in that hotel ______________ years ago. (much / many)